

Risky business for motorists: Passing a stopped school bus

What is the most dangerous part of the school bus ride? The bus stop!

Children are at greatest risk when they are getting on or off the school bus. Most of the children killed in bus-related crashes are pedestrians, five to seven years old, who are getting on or off the bus. They are hit by the school bus or by motorists illegally passing a stopped bus.

In neighborhoods, near schools, and at bus stops, drivers need to take special care because children do not behave like adults.

Elementary school children:

- Become easily distracted and may start across the street without warning
- Don't understand the danger of moving vehicles
- Can't judge vehicle speed or distance
- May be blocked from view by the bus

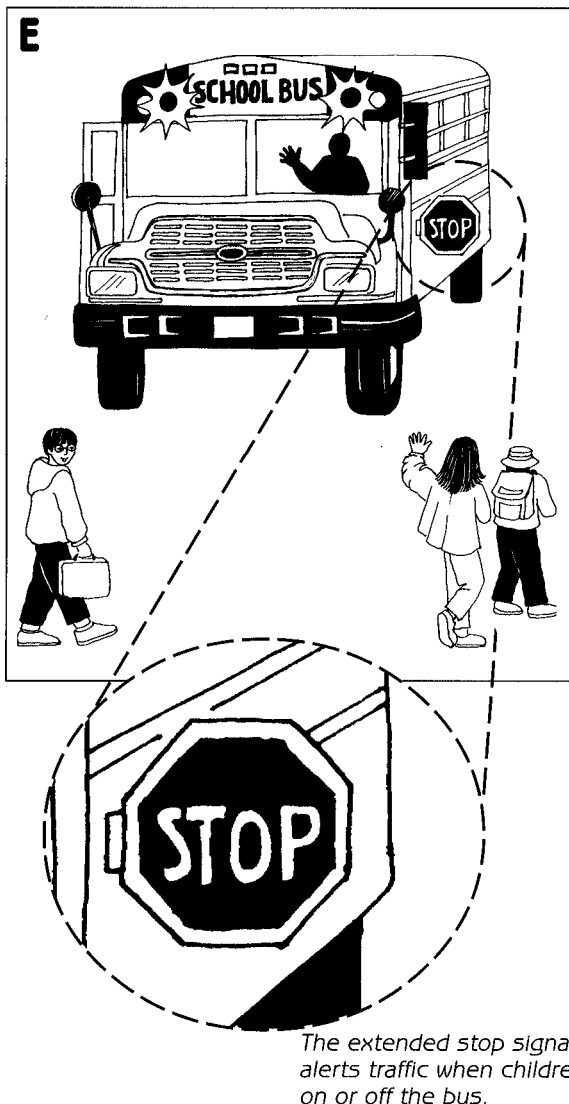
Most importantly, children expect vehicles to stop for them at the school bus stop.

Standard school bus stop laws

Learn and follow the school bus laws for motorists in your state. Laws exist to protect children getting on and off the bus AND to protect you from a tragedy. Check with your school transportation office or police department for more information on your state's laws. Here are standard rules:

- Motorists coming to a school bus from either direction must stop when the bus displays flashing red warning lights and extends the stop signal arm (**D** and **E**). These signals show that children are getting on or off the school bus.
- Vehicles may not pass until the flashing red lights and signals are turned off.
- Drivers traveling in the **same** direction as the bus are always required to stop.
- In some states, drivers moving in the **opposite** direction on a **divided** roadway are also required to stop. Check the law in your state.
- **Never** pass on the right side of the bus, where children enter or exit. This is illegal and can have tragic results.

Violation of these laws can result in a citation and fine. In many places, school bus drivers can report passing vehicles!



**For more information, call the
NHTSA Auto Safety Hotline:
1-888-DASH-2-DOT
or visit the NHTSA website,
www.nhtsa.dot.gov.**